

McKesson, Inc. Employee Health Outreach Program

McKesson, Inc. has embarked on an innovative health outreach program for employees who may be experiencing periods of stress and anxiety in their lives. McKesson administers a voluntary health assessment survey to employees throughout the year, via the web, personal computers, and kiosks located at their place of work. McKesson is collaborating with United Behavioral Health (UBH) and Ronald Kessler, Professor of Health Care Policy at Harvard Medical School, to develop an outreach program and evaluate whether this outreach program works better than the standard behavioral health services that will be offered to McKesson employees by UBH starting in January, 2008. The goal of this program is to find ways to provide more effective and comprehensive health-related services to McKesson employees.

Employees who score high on specific health assessment questions in the fall of 2007 will be randomly assigned to either the new outreach program or the standard UBH services. The outreach program involves a care manager reaching out to the employee via telephone. In the phone conversation, the care manager assesses the employee's level of anxiety or stress, and, as appropriate, encourages the employee to seek professional services from a counselor, social worker, psychiatrist or other clinician. The care manager also provides education and self-help tools to reduce levels of stress, anxiety or depression. The care manager maintains contact with these employees through regular phone calls to inquire if the employee sought the professional services and is following the recommendations of the professional. The employees assigned to the standard UBH services receive a letter informing them that their answers to the health assessment may indicate that professional services may be useful, and are provided with a toll-free number that the employee can call to discuss such services with a UBH care manager.

There is also an evaluation research component of this program led by Professor Kessler and his research staff at Harvard Medical School. The evaluation will determine whether the care manager outreach intervention is more effective than standard UBH care, as measured by changes in symptoms and utilization of services based on data that the employees have agreed to share with the evaluation team. Both groups of employees -- those assigned to the outreach program and those assigned to the standard UBH services -- are informed that they can decline to be in the evaluation component at any time.

For employees who agree to be in the evaluation part of this program, all the data that are collected about them are kept confidential. Professor Kessler will not receive employee names or other identifying information. Results will be presented only in aggregated form to avoid any indirect identification based on personal characteristics. In addition, employees can decide to drop out of the evaluation component at any time.

If you have concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact the New England Institutional Review Board at 1-800-232-9570. For further information on either the health outreach or the evaluation study please contact Rebecca Cate at UBH (rebecca_a_cate@uhc.com) or Elaine Veracruz at Harvard Medical School (veracruz@hcp.med.harvard.edu).